



## INTERAGENCY CONNECTION

215 Dean A. McGee, Suite 153, Oklahoma City, OK 73102

<http://www.oklahoma.feb.gov/>

(405) 231-4167

### Chair's Corner



It's time for the **2016 Leadership FEB** to blast off! They will be visiting NASA this month to receive information on mission and management challenges... and may even get to board a spacecraft.

#### Our **Interagency Security**

**Committee** briefing went extremely well. We were told that of all the sessions they have held, nationwide, Houston was the largest audience.

The first week of this month, LeAnn Jenkins, Executive Director; and I will represent Houston at the **National Strategic meeting for FEBs in Washington, DC**. We look forward to obtaining information on national initiatives and how we may be able to implement for the benefit of the Houston federal community!

We are in the midst of providing entrepreneurship training with three **ENCORE Entrepreneur workshops** in August, located in different areas of the City in order to be convenient for everyone. These are designed for federal employees who may wish to convert their hobby into a business, or are preparing for retirement. No fee!

It is time for federal agencies to begin recruiting **Loaned Executives** for our

**Combined Federal Campaigns (CFC)**! I am requesting your support in identifying candidates to serve as LEs for the 2016 CFC. The most successful LEs have been top performing individuals with a sincere desire to use their executive skills to make a real and positive impact for the CFC supported charities and the communities they serve through the CFC. Individuals must have good communication skills; self-motivation; coordination skills and tolerance for varied processes for various Departments and agencies they may serve. This is an opportunity for your best & brightest to receive high quality leadership development without a registration fee or leaving their commuting area!

The Houston FEB is also partnering with the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) to host a full day training seminar on **Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute**. This is a no-fee training available for your staff. A registration form is provided in this newsletter for your convenience.

I encourage you to be involved in as many of these opportunities as possible. Let's work together to strengthen the federal community of Houston!

Tim Jeffcoat, Chairman

<i>Inside Story</i>	<i>Pg</i>	<i>Inside Story</i>	<i>Pg</i>
Tough Conversations	2	Successful Interruptions	6
Spotlighting Agency	3	Productive People	7
TSP withdrawals	4	FLRA training	9
Second Thing	5	ENCORE workshops	10

## 12 DON'TS OF TOUGH CONVERSATIONS

Success includes not shooting yourself in the foot.

### 12 Don'ts of Tough Conversations:

1. Don't use "we" when you mean "you".
2. Never allow fuzzy language. Exercise candor and precision when fuzzy feels safe.
3. Don't press through when emotion is high. Emotional stress limits creative solution-finding. Self-justification is inevitable.
4. Don't drag things out. Take a break for emotions to cool (#3 above.), but don't wait till next week. Urgency is appropriate if it's an important issue. Why all the emotion if things can drag out for a month or two? Emotional stress may indicate that things have dragged on too long.
5. Never have the same conversation three times. *Unacceptable behavior becomes acceptable when allowed to persist.* Impose higher controls and granular accountability if problems persist.
6. Forget about offering options when you aren't willing to discuss them. If you're going to give direction, do it.
7. Don't adopt an adversarial posture. Help teammates get what they want. *You lose when you try to win a tough conversation.*
8. Don't take responsibility to fix someone. No one enjoys being fixed. People grow. They don't need fixed.
9. Don't expect someone to excel where they lack aspiration, talent or strength. If this is dragging on for months, adjust their responsibilities, reassign them, or manage them out.
10. Never offer suggestions before others design their own. Don't solve problems for people. "What would you like to do about this?" Develop three or four possible solutions and choose one.
11. Don't keep controlling. Give freedom as you see progress. The rule of thumb is controls go up as problems persist and down as progress is achieved.
12. Don't speak down. Poor leadership skills contribute to nagging issues. Maybe procrastinating – on your part – has made the situation worse. *If you think you have it all together, you don't.*



Taken from the Leadership Freak:  
<https://leadershipfreak.wordpress.com/2016/06/10/12-donts-of-tough-conversations/>

## Spotlighting Information in Public Service

### Did you Know?



**U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement**

## Community Relations Dallas Field Office

Enforcement and Removal Operations

#### ABOUT ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the principal investigative arm of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the second largest investigative agency in the federal government.

#### ABOUT ERO

ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) is made up of agents, officers, and professional staff who are sworn to enforce the nation's immigration laws in a fair and effective manner. ICE identifies and removes aliens who present a danger to national security, risk to public safety or defy the integrity of U.S. immigration laws and border control.

#### Commitment to Community Outreach

ERO is dedicated to ensuring the public is fully informed of the agency's immigration enforcement efforts. In support of the agency's mission, ERO is committed to transparency, collaboration and resolving concerns with community stakeholders. These stakeholders include the public, non-governmental organizations, faith-based organizations, academic institutions, attorneys, and advocacy groups. You may contact ERO by calling the ICE Community and Detainee Helpline at **1-888-351-4024** during regular business hours, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST, Monday through Friday.

#### ERO Community Outreach

**Assists** stakeholders in resolving complaints and concerns with ERO policies and operations through the Community and Detainee Helpline and other inquiry channels;

**Engages** stakeholders on immigration enforcement and detention policies, programs, and initiatives to foster accurate understanding of ERO's mission and core values and promote collaboration;

**Recommends** changes and enhancements to custody policies and procedures based on stakeholder input and internal subject matter expertise; and

**Develops** innovative ERO custody management programs and assists in their implementation and oversight.

#### Field Community Engagement

In the field there are 24 Community Field Liaisons, which correspond to ICE ERO's 24 Field Offices that maintain full coverage of the nation. These dedicated liaisons are in the best position to directly resolve issues and concerns regarding ERO practices, policies, and procedures on a local level. The cooperation between the field and ICE Headquarters is critical to effective outreach and issue management.

#### Meet Your Officer

The Dallas CRO works with community stakeholders and leaders to respond to questions and/or concerns regarding immigration efforts. The CRO's job is to inform the community of ICE's enforcement priorities, answer your questions and concerns related to immigration enforcement, and to promote public safety. It is not to determine your immigration status.

**Christopher J. Medina**  
Community Relations Field Liaison  
214-424-7963  
[Dallas.Outreach@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:Dallas.Outreach@ice.dhs.gov)

Connect with ICE ERO Community Relations  
ICE ERO Community & Detainee Helpline: **1-888-351-4024**  
E-mail: [Dallas.Outreach@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:Dallas.Outreach@ice.dhs.gov)  
Web site: [www.ice.gov/about/offices/enforcement-removal-operations/ero-outreach/](http://www.ice.gov/about/offices/enforcement-removal-operations/ero-outreach/)

**ERO Dallas Field Office Community Relations**

[www.ice.gov](http://www.ice.gov)



## Partial and lump sum TSP withdrawals

Here's a pop-quiz question for you: How many partial lump-sum withdrawals are you allowed to take from your Thrift Savings Plan account during your lifetime? Go ahead, write down your answer.

Everyone knows that the answer is one, right? In fact, that is the stated limit in every TSP publication that I can remember seeing. This limit is also one of a number of common reasons that TSP participants decide to roll their account assets from the best retirement investment vehicle in the United States into an individual retirement account after retiring. But, while the TSP's withdrawal restrictions are inconvenient, and maybe even unacceptable in some situations, they are not as restrictive as they appear at first glance.

Basically, there are two kinds of withdrawals you may take from a TSP account: partial and full. Each of these is allowed once during the lifetime of each participant. A partial withdrawal is accomplished using form TSP-75, TSP-76 or TSP-77 to request an age-based, in-service withdrawal, a financial hardship withdrawal, or a partial withdrawal when separated, respectively. A full withdrawal is requested using form TSP-70.

Generally, as a participant, you may submit one form TSP-75, TSP-76 or TSP-77 during your lifetime, and it must be done before you have submitted TSP-70. Once you have submitted form TSP-70, your option to submit any of the three partial withdrawal request forms is gone, and your only option is to take a full and final distribution of the remaining account balance. I do count this as a partial lump-sum withdrawal since it is the completion of a full withdrawal which will end your participation in the TSP.

These rules appear to make it impossible to

take more than one partial lump-sum withdrawal from a TSP account during the life of the account. But, if you plan ahead, there are ways around this limitation. It's possible to extract as many as 3 partial lump-sum payments from your TSP account, if you do it right.

If you haven't yet retired, you can take a loan from your account and then leave a balance unrepaid after you have retired. After 90 days of separation from service, an unpaid loan balance will be declared a taxable distribution—effectively a partial lump-sum distribution. But, this distribution does not count against your lifetime limit. You may still file one of the three partial distribution request forms either before, or after, the loan balance is declared to be taxable.

If you'll take a look at form TSP-70, the form used to request a full withdrawal, you'll find that in section IV on page 2 there is a space to specify a percentage of your account's balance to be paid to you in a lump-sum as part of a full withdrawal. The other options that may be elected as part of a full withdrawal are a life annuity contract and monthly payments. Each of these three options are applied to a percentage of your account balance, and the total of the percentage you enter here must equal 100 percent. That's what makes it a full withdrawal.

If you want the single payment right away, but don't need the monthly payments yet, you can set the amount of the monthly payments to as little as \$25 per month and leave it there for as long as you like.

*Taken from Federal Times April 2016 article written by Mike Miles, a Certified Financial Planner licensee and principal adviser for Variplan LLC.*

## MANAGING THE SECOND THING

Obstacles make leaders relevant. Exemption is not an option.

Positive thinking never eliminates obstacles.

Doing great work doesn't give you a pass on challenges, resistance, frustrations, complications, disadvantages, impediments, or hurdles.

### ***Obstacles are two things:***

Everything that happens to you is made of two things.

The first is the thing that happened. The second is the way you think about the thing that happened.

### ***Managing the second thing:***

The most important thing you do is manage the second thing – the way you think about obstacles.

#### **#1. Opportunities.**

Every obstacle is an opportunity, if you choose to make it so.

Clear thinking, not feeling, transforms obstacles into opportunities. Emotion is baggage when it comes to obstacles. You'll hate leading until you *think* of obstacles as opportunities.

Viewing obstacles as opportunities changes *you*, not the obstacles. The profound question of leadership is, "How do you need to change?"

Your greatest opportunity is developing your ability to serve. When you view obstacles as enemies, resentment destroys the opportunity of self-development.

Resistance blocks development.

#### **#2. Lean in.**

The obstacle you run from today, meets you around the corner tomorrow.

Marcus Aurelius wrote,

"Our actions may be impeded, but there can be no impeding our intentions or dispositions. Because we can accommodate and adapt. The mind adapts and

converts to its own purposes the obstacle to our acting. The impediment to action advances action. *What stands in the way becomes the way.*"

#### **#3. Optimism.**

Never minimize challenges in the name of optimism.

1. Optimism is looking the darkness in the eye with resolve to be better; to learn, grow, adapt, rise, and move forward.
2. Optimism is whispering into the darkness, "Who are you calling me to become?"
3. Optimism is realizing you aren't able right now, but you will be.



Taken from  
<https://leadershipfreak.wordpress.com/2016/05/16/managing-the-second-thing/>

## 7 WAYS SUCCESSFUL MANAGERS INTERRUPT

Successful managers have bad manners, sometimes.

You aren't going far if you don't learn how to interrupt people who talk too much. Managing isn't therapy.

### ***Interrupt:***

Successful managers have bad manners when team members talk on and on.

People who talk on and on want sympathy, not solutions.

### ***7 ways successful managers interrupt:***

Use one of these seven questions to interrupt people who are talking too long. Don't wait. Interrupt.

1. "What's your question?"
2. "What's next?"
3. "What would you like to do about this?"
4. "What are you trying to accomplish?"
5. "If things were going perfectly, what would it look like?"
6. "And what do you want?"
7. "What's your conclusion about this?"

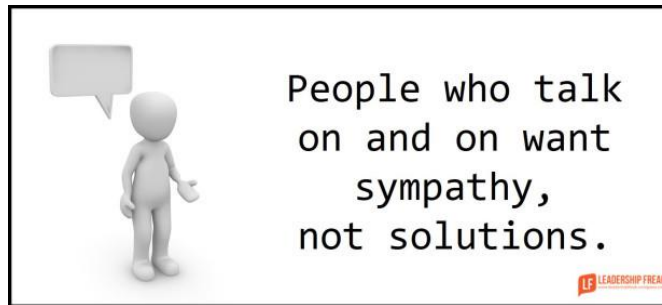
I used #1 while answering questions after a recent presentation. There was a long line of people who had questions. I decided to interrupt one participant who was sharing too much information.

"What's your question?"

Without taking a breath, she asked her question. I answered and said, "Thank you." I fear we might still be sitting there if I hadn't interrupted.

### ***4 tips for having bad manners:***

1. Speak gently. Tone matters. Frustration doesn't create connection.
2. Set a time limit when the conversation begins. "I'm sorry, but I only have ten minutes right now. What's your question?"
3. Insert an "and" or "so" before you interrupt. "So I'm just wondering what you want?"
4. Don't say, "How can I help?" until they offer their own solutions (unless it's to help them find solutions).



Successful managers learn how to interrupt in productive ways.

### ***Warning:***

Some of us could use a little more patience when it comes to listening. You may need to practice saying, "And what else?" rather than interrupting.

Taken from LeadershipFreak post:

<https://leadershipfreak.wordpress.com/2016/05/13/7-ways-successful-managers-interrupt/>

## Critical Things Organized and Productive People Do Every Day

We often confuse being productive with working as fast as we can, every second of the day. We fear that slowing down to get organized will kill our productivity, but the facts suggest otherwise:

- The average office employee spends over one hour each day just looking for things.
- The average U.S. executive spends six weeks per year searching through messy desks and disorganized files for misplaced information.
- 23% of adults say they're late paying their bills because they lose them.

Being disorganized is costly, in terms of both money and time. But if you can convince yourself to slow down and get organized, the ROI will shock you.

While Benjamin Franklin's estimation is overstated, spending time getting organized is still a valuable investment.

Experts estimate that every hour spent in planning and organizing saves three to four hours of time that would otherwise be wasted.

There's a reason why people who are the calmest and least stressed are the ones who get the most done—they understand the importance of organization, and they've adapted their habits accordingly. The good news is that you can become more organized and productive too, just by emulating the habits that they rely on.

**They don't let their desks get cluttered.** You may think you know exactly where, and in which stack of paper, you can find a particular document. But you're kidding yourself if you don't think you'd be more productive with a clean and organized desk. Just the act of organizing the stuff on your desk helps you organize it in your mind. In addition, research conducted at Princeton University revealed that the more our brains are bombarded by the

competing stimuli on a cluttered desk, the less we're able to focus. And this wasn't just subjective evidence; they were able to see the difference in MRIs of the subjects' brain activity.

**They never touch things twice.** Organized and productive people never put anything in a holding pattern, because touching things twice is a huge time-waster. Don't save an e-mail or a phone call to deal with later. As soon as something gets your attention, you should act on it, delegate it, or delete it.

**They don't respond to e-mails as they arrive.** Productive people don't allow their e-mail to be a constant interruption. In addition to checking their e-mail on a schedule, they take advantage of features that prioritize messages by sender. They set alerts for their most important vendors and their best customers, and they save the rest until they reach a stopping point in their work. Some people even set up an

autoresponder that lets senders know when they'll be checking their e-mail again.

**They work from a single to-do list.** Remember the days when people used to buy those expensive, leather-bound planners and fill them up with a to-do list color-coded by priority? Those might seem a bit old school now, but no one can deny that it was effective. Why were those planners effective? They reminded us how important it is to keep a single to-do list. When you consolidate everything into one list, you always know where to look, and you can stop wasting time trying to remember which list has the information you need.

**They have a high level of self-awareness.** Highly productive and organized people have a clear sense of who they are. They know their weaknesses, and they put organizational structures in place to overcome them. If they tend to let meetings run too long,



*"For every minute spent organizing, an hour is earned." – Benjamin Franklin*

## Critical Things Organized and Productive People Do Every Day (cont'd)

they set a timer. If they have trouble keeping meetings productive, they make an agenda. If they forget to check their voicemail in the morning, they set a reminder. The details don't matter; what's important is that they think carefully and use specific aids and routines that work with their organizational weaknesses.

**They make time for lunch.** We've all been there—you're head-down busy, and by the time you look up, it's way past lunchtime. You end up either going without, or grabbing a donut or a bag of chips from the snack machine. Both are really bad ideas. The donut will give you an energy boost for about 20 minutes, but after that, your focus will drop like a rock. As far as skipping meals, not only does it affect your concentration, productivity, and problem-solving skills, it also affects your waistline—and not in the way you might expect. Research from Ohio State University shows that the weight you lose by skipping meals is muscle weight that you regain later as fat.

**They eat frogs.** "Eating a frog" is the best antidote for procrastination; ultra-productive people start each morning with this tasty "treat." In other words, they do the least appetizing, most dreaded item on their to-do list first, before they do anything else. After that, they're freed up to tackle the stuff that excites and inspires them.

**They tidy up at the end of each day.** The best remedy for clutter is to set aside about 10 minutes at the end of each day to organize your desk. Although we know that it's best to touch things only once, we've all stopped halfway through a task because the phone rang or somebody stopped by to chat. You really can't prevent such things, but you *can* end the day by resolving all of the things you left half-finished.

**They plan their days the night before.** Organized and productive people go to bed each night, secure in the knowledge of what they'll accomplish the following day. They get

their priorities straight the night before, so that once the day starts, they're less likely to get distracted by the "tyranny of the urgent"—those little fires that pop up and get in the way of their real priorities.

**They make full use of technology.** There's been a lot said about how modern technology extends the work day, making it so that we're always on the clock. While that may be true, technology can also make us more productive. Whether it's setting up an e-mail filter to keep your inbox spam-free, or using an app like Evernote to organize information you're going to need again, technology isn't always bad. Used properly, it can save a lot of time.

**They don't ignore their snail mail.** For this one, we go back to the "touch it once" philosophy. For most of us, there's not a lot of snail mail these days that we actually look forward to. But ignoring it can cause problems, especially when it comes to things like bills and tax notifications. Just go ahead and open it, and take care of it as soon as it arrives; otherwise, you'll end up digging under the sofa cushions searching for that overdue bill.

### Bringing It All Together

Every minute you spend looking for something you misplaced, or trying to remember what you're supposed to do next, will harm your productivity. That, in turn, eats into your career potential. The good news is that there are many tools you can use to stay organized and productive, and so even the most disorganized among us can put a system in place to keep us in check.

Article written by **Dr. Travis Bradberry**, the award-winning co-author of the #1 bestselling book, *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*, and the cofounder of TalentSmart, the world's leading provider of emotional intelligence tests and training, serving more than 75% of Fortune 500 companies.





## Houston Federal Executive Board And the Federal Labor Relations Authority

### *Training on the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute*

Date:	Wednesday, November 2, 2016
Time:	8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Location:	Leland Building, 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room 1919 Smith Street, Houston, OK
Offered by:	Federal Labor Relations Authority, Office of the General Counsel Dallas Regional Office

#### **What will this training cover?**

This course offers a broad overview of federal-sector labor law. Topics include: the duty to bargain in good faith, including the *de minimis* and "covered by" doctrines, and substantive versus impact and implementation bargaining; meetings, including formal discussions, bypasses, and investigatory examinations (or Weingarten meetings); interference with statutory rights and discrimination based on protected activity; bars to filing ULP charges, such as timeliness and prior grievances; and information requests.

#### **Who should attend this training?**

Union representatives – officers and stewards – and agency representatives – from first-line supervisor to agency head. If you are involved in labor-relations at your agency, this training will provide an overview of your rights and responsibilities under the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute.

#### **How do I sign up?**

Room capacity is 75; when registrations reach 75, this event will be closed.

Go to the FLRA website and sign up here:

<https://www.flra.gov/resources-training/training/upcoming-flra-training>



Houston Federal Executive Board  
&  
U.S. Small Business Administration  
**PRESENT: *Encore Entrepreneurs***



The Houston Federal Executive Board is thrilled to announce that we are collaborating with SBA, SCORE and AARP to host this year's Encore Entrepreneurs Tour. The tour is designed to provide federal employees that are interested in entrepreneurship with superb training, workshops and multiple resources.

The FEB has arranged multiple locations for your convenience!

All workshops will begin promptly at 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

**Please register for the workshop you wish to attend:**

<input type="checkbox"/>	June 29, 2016, Alliance Tower, 8701 S Gessner Rd., Ste 1200, Houston
<input type="checkbox"/>	August 1, 2016, Mickey Leland Bldg, 1919 Smith Street (1 <sup>st</sup> floor auditorium), Houston
<input type="checkbox"/>	August 17, 2016, NASA, Gilruth Center, 2101 NASA Parkway, Bldg 207, Houston
<input type="checkbox"/>	August 30, 2016, Federal Detention Center, Conference Rm, 1200 Texas Ave., Houston

**Registration**

Name:	Agency:
Phone:	Address:
Email:	

Mail this registration form to:	Houston Federal Executive Board 2320 LaBranch St., Rm 1107 Houston, TX 77004-1032
Or email to:	Gerald.Poole@gsa.gov

**Cancellation Policy:** While there is no fee for attending these workshops, we ask that you honor your registration to attend. Understanding that unforeseen circumstances may preclude an individual from attending, substitute attendees are authorized and encouraged!